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Evaluation

Annual report on evaluation in UNDP 2010

Summary

The 2010 annual report on evaluation assesses the progress made by the UNDP Evaluation Office, UNDP Headquarters programme and policy units, country offices and the evaluation units of the associated funds and programmes in fulfilling the evaluation function outlined in the UNDP evaluation policy. The report also presents key findings and lessons learned from independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office in 2010. The Evaluation Office programme of work for 2011 and 2012 is provided in the final part of the report.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the report; (b) request UNDP to address the issues raised by independent evaluations; (c) request UNDP to strengthen capacity for and use of decentralized evaluation; (d) request UNDP to support national evaluation capacity development; and (e) approve the revised programme of work for 2011 proposed by the Evaluation Office and the proposed programme of work for 2012.

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Background

1. The 2010 annual report on evaluation is the fifth report submitted by the Evaluation Office of UNDP to the Executive Board since the UNDP evaluation policy was approved in 2006 and the first since the approval of the revised evaluation policy in February 2011. The report assesses the progress made by the Evaluation Office and the evaluation units of the associated funds and programmes in fulfilling the evaluation function outlined in the UNDP evaluation policy. It also presents an assessment of the evaluation capacity in the organization, evaluative evidence available for managing development results, and compliance in decentralized evaluation. The lessons emerging from independent evaluations are discussed, and the programme of work for 2011 and 2012 is presented (see section III) for Executive Board approval.

I. The evaluation function

A. UNDP Evaluation Office

Coverage

2. The Evaluation Office conducts independent evaluations of corporate and global, regional and country programme outcomes identified in the UNDP strategic plan, and approved by the Executive Board. During 2010-2011 the Evaluation Office conducted 14 assessments of development results (ADRs) in Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mongolia, Paraguay, Senegal, Somalia, Thailand and Tunisia. The Evaluation Office also completed five thematic evaluations covering key pillars of the work of UNDP: an evaluation of the UNDP contribution at the regional level to development and corporate results; an evaluation of the UNDP contribution to disaster prevention and recovery; an evaluation of the UNDP contribution to strengthening local governance; an evaluation of the UNDP contribution to environmental management for poverty reduction: the poverty-environment nexus; and an evaluation of the UNDP contribution to strengthening national capacities.

Review of the UNDP evaluation policy and its revision

3. In approving the first UNDP evaluation policy in 2006, the Executive Board requested the Evaluation Office to commission an independent review of the policy. The 2010 review, the quality of which was assured by an independent panel of advisers, confirmed the continued relevance of the policy, and also highlighted improvements, namely in management response and the use of independent evaluations. It was noted, however, that progress on decentralized evaluations was limited, particularly as regards their coverage, quality and compliance, and despite the availability of guidance and support.

4. In responding to the Executive Board decision on the independent review and the management response, UNDP revised the evaluation policy for approval by the Executive Board at its first regular session in 2011. The revision process was highly consultative and led by UNDP senior management. Revisions were made to clarify roles and responsibilities and to improve the evaluation practice in UNDP. Notably, greater importance has been given to national ownership in the evaluation process; to national evaluation capacity development; and to the use of evaluation for organizational learning and accountability. A new compliance requirement for decentralized evaluations has been introduced in this policy and is intended to: give flexibility to programme units in determining how to carry out evaluations; and promote joint efforts with national partners in evaluation. The revised policy is to be subject to periodic independent review.

Support to building a culture of evaluation in UNDP

5. Following the approval of the revised evaluation policy, the Evaluation Office, in partnership with the Operations Support Group and the Capacity Development Group of the Bureau for Development Policy, is amending the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results and the Programme and Operations Policy and Procedures (POPP) to incorporate expanded

guidance on evaluation compliance and planning. The revised POPP will be made available in March 2011.

6. The Evaluation Office is developing a set of quality standards and guidelines on outcome-oriented decentralized evaluations which will be used to assess and rate decentralized evaluations in the future. Guidance will also be provided on reporting requirements and formats. The guidelines will provide examples of good practices and tools and templates, as well as suggestions on how to involve partners. These guidelines will be available in April 2011. The Evaluation Office is leading the development of an e-learning course on evaluation to be made available via the UNDP Learning Resource Centre. The course is primarily targeted at programme managers in UNDP's country offices and aims to deepen their understanding of evaluation principles and methodology, and their application when managing UNDP programmes and projects. It complements the Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, providing an additional learning tool for UNDP managers.

7. To help address the existing challenges in enhancing the quality and use of decentralized evaluations, as well as to improve the accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board, the Evaluation Office, in close collaboration with regional, policy and practice bureaux, has been developing a quality-assessment mechanism for decentralized evaluations. In 2011 the Evaluation Office will begin assessing the quality of all evaluation reports commissioned in accordance with respective evaluation plans. In this work, the Office will be using a set of quality criteria in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation for the United Nations system and the Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. (UNEG is a professional network responsible for evaluation within the United Nations system.)

8. The Evaluation Office has managed the online evaluation experts roster since 2006. Given the growing number of requests from country offices to help locate qualified and experienced evaluators, the Evaluation Office initiated discussions with the regional bureaux and regional service centres to build a common platform which would consolidate various evaluation expert rosters and other parallel systems maintained by different programme units. The platform is to be based on standard criteria for vetting consultants and will provide UNDP staff with a single point of entry for accessing a wider pool of qualified consultants and facilitating cross-regional use of evaluation expertise. Since 2001 the Evaluation Office has managed the knowledge network on evaluation, EvalNet, which provides evaluation news and resources. The network has 1,413 members and will be gradually integrated over the course of 2011-2012 with the new evaluation space on the UNDP Teamworks platform.

9. The Evaluation Office manages the publicly accessible online Evaluation Resources Centre (ERC).[1] The system includes evaluations conducted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Volunteers and UN-Women. In 2010 the ERC was updated to accommodate the Global Environment Facility (GEF) evaluations, becoming the single evaluations repository for UNDP and its funds and programmes. Following the approval of the review of the evaluation policy, the ERC was updated to incorporate the new framework, which will allow for easier tracking of changes to evaluation plans, ensuring their compliance with the new policy. During the reporting period, the ERC repository contained more than 1,700 evaluation reports.

Resources

10. For 2010 the Evaluation Office received a budget of $7.743 million from UNDP core funding, a reduction of 14 per cent from 2009. Staff costs remain almost the same, with a disbursement of $3.277 million out of $3.963 million allocated to the Office. It should be noted that there was a 25 per cent decrease in the budget allocated for evaluations. The total expenditure on evaluations and other corporate related activities was $3.982 million, of which $3.758 million came from the UNDP core budget and the remainder from non-core contributions ($138,950 from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and $38,676 from the Global Environment Facility). The Evaluation Office continues to have 23 staff members (17 professional and 6 general services). Sixty-five per cent of all staff members, and 50 per cent of the professional staff members, are women.

[1] See http://erc.undp.org

Quality

11. The Evaluation Office continued to enhance the technical and managerial rigour of its evaluations. Focusing on greater national ownership of the evaluation process, the 2010 ADRs have further strengthened engagement with the national stakeholders, in particular through their participation in evaluation reference groups. Such reference groups were established to guide and enhance the quality of the evaluations, and to ensure they were fully grounded in national realities and facilitated broader ownership of the evaluation process. Efforts were also made to strengthen the system of external advisory panels for thematic evaluations.

Diversity of evaluation consultants

12. Support for national evaluation capacity in developing countries has long been part of the agenda of the Evaluation Office. In 2010 a major effort was made to facilitate the strengthening of national capacities by significantly increasing the use of national professionals from programme countries in the evaluation process. As a result, there has been a marked change in the composition of the evaluation teams, with an increase of programme-country consultants from 35 per cent of the total in 2008 to 77 per cent in 2010. In 2008 only 20 per cent of evaluation team leaders were from programme countries, compared with 55 per cent in 2010.

13. A number of ADRs have been conducted entirely by national consultants. The teams that undertook the ADRs for Bangladesh, Malawi and El Salvador consisted of, and were led by, national evaluators. Similarly, in Thailand and Brazil, national institutions were selected through a competitive process to undertake the evaluations. Regarding gender, although there is near-parity for consultants, overall the number of women in team-leader positions has decreased (6 per cent of the total in 2010 compared to 28 per cent in 2008). The majority of evaluation consultants recruited in 2010 was male (66 per cent of international consultants and 75 per cent of national consultants). Table 1 illustrates the regional balance of consultants used in evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office.

Table 1: Evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office: consultants by region

	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Thematic evaluations								
Team leaders	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	5
Team specialists	1	0	1	6	2	5	1	16
Country case studies consultants	8	1	7	2	6	1	1	26
Assessments of Development Results								
Team leaders	3	1	3	5	2	1	0	15
Team specialists	7	6	15	2	16	0	0	46
Total	20	8	27	17	27	7	2	108

B. United Nations Evaluation Group

14. The Evaluation Office continued its strong support to the rigorous agenda of the United Nations Evaluation Group, including advancing United Nations system-wide coherence as well as quality and innovation in evaluation. The Director of the Evaluation Office was re-elected in 2009 to serve as UNEG

Chair for a term of two years, until the next annual meeting in March 2011. UNDP hosts the UNEG secretariat, which is currently managed by the Deputy Director of the Evaluation Office in his capacity as UNEG Executive Coordinator, as delegated by the Director.

15. The UNEG work programme for 2010 was implemented by six task forces and one working group, in which the Evaluation Office participated actively. The UNDP Evaluation Office was the co-chair for the working group established to revise the UNEG Norms and Standards[2] and of the task force on harmonization of evaluation across the United Nations. (This latter group was to focus, in particular, on joint and United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations.) The Office also co-chaired the UNEG task force that is developing a concept note identifying possible roles for UNEG members in evaluation capacity development in partner countries. The Office continues to contribute substantively to inter-agency discussions pertaining to United Nations reform and evaluation. The Director of the Evaluation Office, in her capacity as UNEG Chair, is a member of the evaluation management group for the independent evaluation of the Delivering as One pilots, as well as taking part in the discussions on establishing an independent, system-wide mechanism for evaluation in the United Nations, in line with the General Assembly resolution 63/211 on system-wide coherence.

16. Evaluation Office staff members also continued to participate actively in other UNEG initiatives, including developing a guidance document on impact evaluations; developing a handbook for evaluators in the United Nations system so they could explore integrating human rights and gender-equality perspectives in the management and conduct of evaluations; and conducting a review of existing frameworks and tools for assessing evaluation functions in the United Nations system. The Office also contributed to the preparations of the UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar 2011, a professional event facilitating the exchange of knowledge and lessons learned among United Nations evaluators.

17. UNEG initiatives are integrated in the office programme of work and in the individual performance plans of staff members of the Evaluation Office.

C. Associated funds and programmes

United Nations Capital Development Fund

18. Programme evaluations continue to be a key corporate priority for UNCDF. For the year 2010 UNCDF allocated $885,357 from the core and non-core budgets for programme and project evaluation. The UNCDF Evaluation Unit has three staff members, including an additional Evaluation Specialist post created in 2010. In 2010, regional offices in Bangkok and Dakar recruited two Junior Professional Officers as monitoring and evaluation officers. The UNCDF Evaluation Unit significantly expanded its programme of work, signalling a move towards the greater use of evaluative evidence in UNCDF programming. In 2010, eight evaluations were commissioned, compared with four evaluations commissioned in 2009.

19. In 2010 a Special Project Implementation Review Exercise (SPIRE) was implemented. It covered eight projects and involving a two-level evaluation approach: (1) assessment of UNCDF programmes against their specific design; and (2) evaluating how these programmes worked in the context of the UNCDF corporate strategy. The latter involved cross-country comparisons and the tracking of progress towards achieving global objectives. The SPIRE methodology will be adapted to harmonize with the new evaluation policy and its emphasis on learning from evaluations.

20. Following the revision of the UNDP evaluation policy, UNCDF will conduct at least one strategic or thematic assessment per year in response to corporate priorities. It will also conduct midterm or final evaluations of selected projects in critical areas of relevance to the two UNCDF practice areas of local development and inclusive finance, as well as project evaluations when required by a partnership protocol. UNCDF will also participate in evaluations of joint programmes as required by approved joint programme documents. A consultancy was launched to review the evaluation function of UNCDF in view of the revised evaluation policy. The exercise will advise on the optimal approaches and

[2] www.unevaluation.org/unegnorms and www.unevaluation.org/unegstandards.

arrangements for the conduct of UNCDF evaluations at the Headquarters, regional and country-office levels. The exercise is slated to be concluded by June 2011.

21. The UNCDF Evaluation Unit continued to have an active engagement with the United Nations Evaluation Group, participating in two task forces: on gender and human rights, and on national capacity development in evaluation.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

22. UNIFEM became part of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) as of 1 January 2011. Due to this change, this report covers the period from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010. For the year 2010 the budget was $1,712,753.23, of which $819,083.30 was from core funding and $893,669.93 from non-core funding. The latter funds are to be distributed over a two-year period. During the reporting period the Evaluation Unit had eight staff members and one consultant (seven professional and two support posts). Ten independent evaluations were completed in 2010 compared to 14 in 2009. The Evaluation Unit of UNIFEM reported an increase in the decentralized evaluation completion rate from 32 per cent in 2009 to 38 per cent in 2010. The completion rate for management responses increased from 14 per cent in 2009 to 50 per cent in 2010.

23. The UNIFEM evaluation policy has provided a framework for evaluation within the organization. For the improvement of evaluation use and accountability, in 2010 the UNIFEM module of the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre was launched and made available globally. This allowed decentralized offices to upload evaluation plans, evaluation reports and management responses.

24. Throughout 2010 the staff of the Evaluation Unit participated in a number of professional development workshops and conferences. A global monitoring and evaluation network was launched in order to facilitate exchange and learning regarding monitoring and evaluation issues among UNIFEM staff. Information will be exchanged on upcoming evaluation courses, tools and publications. As part of the efforts to create guidelines and tools for UNIFEM staff and partners on how to design, manage and use evaluations, the Evaluation Unit finalized a comprehensive online evaluation manual: "A manager's guide to gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation", and developed two new evaluation guidelines on the inceptions reports and the use of evaluation resource centre. The first phase of the UNIFEM evaluation capacity building programme was completed in 2010. This was followed by the delivery in Mexico City, Mexico of the regional course for programme managers and partners in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

25. The Unit continued to explore the possibilities of strategic partnerships, promoting knowledge exchange on gender equality and human rights responsive evaluation. The UNIFEM Evaluation Unit participated in the third conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization (ReLAC), which was held in Costa Rica. As an outcome, a working group on gender and evaluation was constituted within the framework of ReLAC. UNIFEM was a co-sponsor of the ninth international conference of the European Evaluation Society and facilitated expert discussion panels on gender and evaluation. The UNIFEM Evaluation Unit further strengthened its partnership with the American Evaluation Association (AEA) by contributing to the development and delivery of the pre-conference workshop on "Gender analysis and evaluation methods" and contributing to an expert panel on human rights in evaluation.

26. The UNIFEM Evaluation Unit continued to be actively engaged with the United Nations Evaluation Group, co-chairing two task forces: the taskforce on human rights and gender equality, and the taskforce on evaluation practice exchange. The Evaluation Unit was also a member of another three task forces, thus actively participating in five task forces, as compared to four last year. In this way the Unit has been able to ensure the integration of gender equality and human rights principles in their work programmes.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

27. For the year 2010, the UNV programme Evaluation Unit had a budget of $422,792, of which $210,757 was funded from the core budget. The departure of key staff members in 2010 had serious implications for the work of the Evaluation Unit which had no staff at the beginning of 2011. In 2010, UNV completed its internal change process and put in place a new organizational structure. The

Evaluation Unit was not affected and continued to maintain its independence from programme activities. Its terms of reference were strengthened to emphasize its norm-setting and capacity-development role for staff involved in programme design, management and oversight.

28. Despite staff constraints, eight project evaluations were completed in 2010. An in-depth assessment of the research and development function in UNV was conducted and the recommendations were taken into account in the finalization of the new organizational structure of UNV. The manual on planning, monitoring and evaluation in UNV was developed in 2010, to serve as a complement to the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, with a focus on UNV-specific management tools and content. The Manual is due to be released in 2011 and will be accompanied by staff training.

29. The UNV programme Evaluation Unit is an active participant in UNEG and participates in learning activities and information-sharing. UNEG selected the UNV female genital mutilation project in Sudan as one of five pilots for review and inclusion to the UNEG evaluation handbook on human rights and gender.

D. Programme units

Compliance

30. The UNDP evaluation policy[3] mandates that country programmes be accompanied by an evaluation plan along with the country programme for the programme period. These evaluation plans are prepared in consultation with government counterparts and are endorsed by respective regional bureaux. These decentralized evaluations are funded through the programme budget and conducted by external evaluators who are hired by the country office. It is mandatory to plan and carry out outcome evaluations, as outlined in the evaluation plan. All evaluation reports and their management responses are made available publicly in the Evaluation Resources Centre.

31. Out of the 25 country programmes which concluded in 2010, nine did not carry out or plan for any outcome evaluations. Of the remaining 16 country programmes that did plan for outcome evaluations, seven were fully compliant (see Table 2). This year 28 per cent of the county offices' evaluation plans were compliant, compared with fewer than 10 per cent reported last year.

32. According to the UNDP evaluation policy, it is mandatory for all completed evaluations to have a management response. During this reporting period, management responses were issued for 78 per cent of all completed evaluations (see Table 3).

Table 2. Outcome evaluation compliance

Region	Number of country programmes in compliance	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Africa	9	1	4	4
Arab States	3	1		2
Asia and the Pacific	5	2	2	1
Europe and the CIS	6	2	3	1
Latin America and the Caribbean	2	1		1
Total (percentage of total)	25 (100)	7 (28)	9 (36)	9 (36)

[3] The revised UNDP evaluation policy was approved by the Executive Board at its first regular session in January 2011. For the purpose of reporting on compliance and coverage, requirements of the 2006 evaluation policy are applied in the 2010 Annual Report on Evaluation.

Notes:
* Completed all planned outcome evaluations.
** Completed at least one, but not all, planned outcome evaluations.
*** Did not complete any planned outcome evaluations.

Coverage

33. In the 2010 reporting period, 88 country offices completed 185 evaluations (35 outcome evaluations, 130 project evaluations, and 20 other types of evaluations, including United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations). Compared to last year, there was a slight decline in the total number of evaluations conducted. This decline was most noticeable in the Asia and the Pacific region and the Arab States region. There was, however, an increase in the number of countries that conducted at least one evaluation, with the African region displaying the most significant increase in the number of countries conducting evaluations (see Table 3 and Table A in the Annex).

34. The regional bureaux and the policy and practice bureaux are also required to conduct evaluations of their respective policies and programmes. During this reporting period, they conducted two evaluations: the Bureau for Development Policy completed an evaluation of the Joint UNDP/World Bank/UNAIDS HIV Mainstreaming programme, and the Regional Bureau of Europe and CIS carried out a project evaluation of efforts to support country actions related to the Convention on Biological Diversity programme of work on protected areas.

35. The thematic coverage of evaluations was similar to last year. The focus areas with the largest number of evaluations were governance and poverty (see Figure 1).

36. The number of outcome evaluations conducted at the country level still remains low. In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, however, there has been a slight upward trend over the last three years, but in the Asia and the Pacific region, there was a decline compared with last year (see Figure 2). Some of the evaluations listed in the "other" category were outcome-oriented programmatic evaluations such as United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) evaluations. In the Africa region all 13 evaluations classified as "other" were outcome-oriented evaluations. This demonstrates an increased organizational-level focus on outcome, and this is anticipated to be a trend in light of the spirit of the revised evaluation policy.

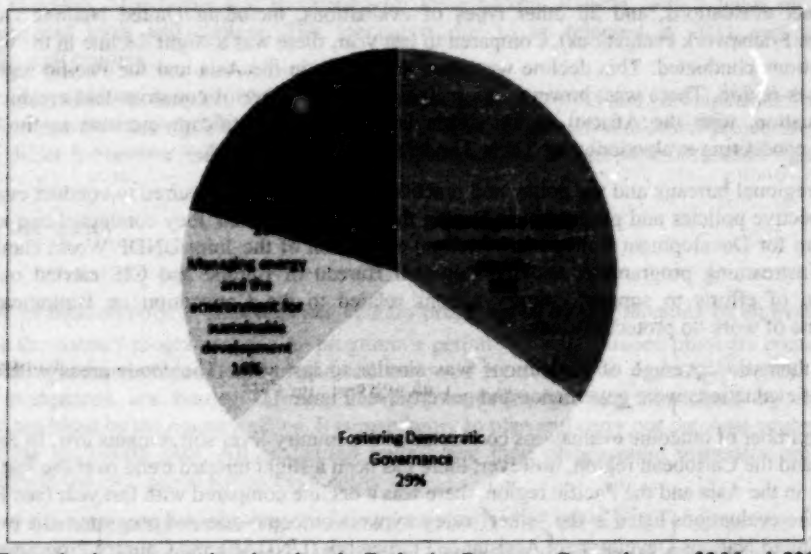
Table 3. Regional distribution of evaluations*

Total number of evaluations in 2010	185	65	15	29	42	34
of which project evaluations	130	40	10	23	36	21
of which outcome evaluations	35	12	4	4	5	10
of which other evaluations	20	13	1	2	1	3
Percentage of outcome evaluations in total evaluations	19	18	27	14	12	29
Percentage of countries with at least one evaluation of any type	63	69	39	48	77	72

Percentage of evaluations with a management response	78	78	80	79	74	82

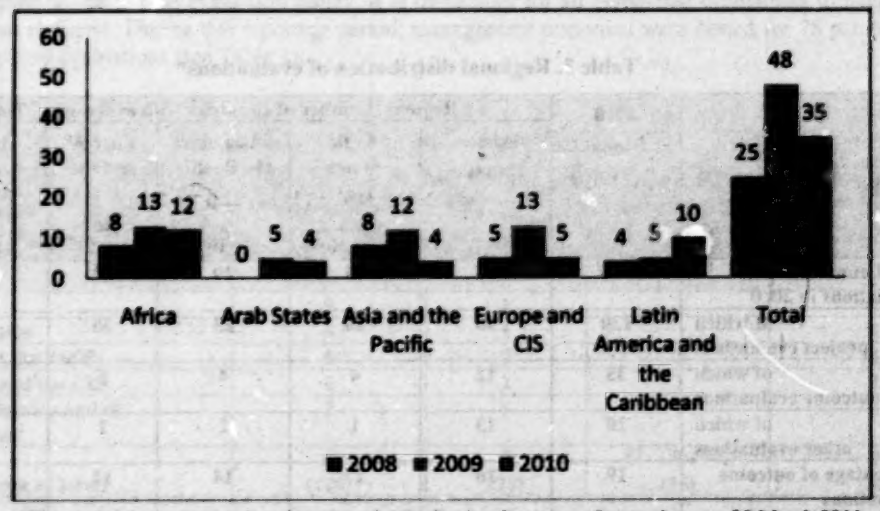
*The evaluations presented are based on the Evaluation Resources Centre data as of 3 March 2011.

Figure 1. Thematic distribution of evaluations*



*The evaluations presented are based on the Evaluation Resources Centre data as of 3 March 2011.

Figure 2. Outcome evaluation in UNDP country offices (2008-2010)*



*The evaluations presented are based on the Evaluation Resources Centre data as of 3 March 2011.

Quality

37. An assessment of the quality of 33 outcome evaluations conducted in 2010, using a standardized set of criteria, was carried out by the Evaluation Office. The findings of the quality assessment are presented in Table 4. The percentage of the outcome evaluations that were found to be satisfactory and moderately satisfactory was about 64 per cent in 2010 and has slightly increased compared with 2009 (60 per cent). While there has been an increase in the evaluations found to be unsatisfactory, no evaluations were found highly unsatisfactory.

38. In line with the results of the previous two years, the analysis of ratings for each criterion suggests that the evaluation reports were strongest with regard to "clarity of evaluation purpose and subject". Performance with respect to "evaluation objectives and criteria" and "methods for data collection and analysis" were judged to be the weakest. Weak evaluation design and methodology were also reported in the assessments conducted in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The rest of the criteria (findings, conclusions and recommendations) were, for the most part, evenly distributed. The assessment also indicates that evaluation findings are not always based on reliable and measurable evidence, but rather reflect subjective statements based on general impressions or anecdotal evidence. Conclusions are often confounded with findings or mixed up with recommendations.

Table 4. Summary of outcome evaluation ratings by quality criteria*

Rating	Quality criteria							
	2010 overall	Coverage and credibility of the report	Clarity of evaluation purpose and subject	Evaluation objectives and criteria	Methods for data collection and analysis	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Highly satisfactory	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	8 (24%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	6 (18%)
Satisfactory	7 (21%)	8 (24%)	9 (27%)	5 (16%)	8 (24%)	10 (31%)	8 (24%)	15 (45%)
Moderately satisfactory	14 (43%)	14 (43%)	9 (27%)	9 (27%)	8 (24%)	13 (39%)	11 (34%)	6 (18%)
Moderately unsatisfactory	8 (24%)	9 (27%)	5 (16%)	9 (27%)	10 (31%)	6 (18%)	6 (18%)	5 (16%)
Unsatisfactory	4 (12%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	7 (21%)	7 (21%)	2 (6%)	7 (21%)	1 (3%)
Highly unsatisfactory	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	33 (100%)

* The outcome evaluations whose quality was assessed are presented in the Annex (see the Executive Board website).

E. Evaluation capacity

39. Data on evaluation capacity at the country level gathered by the Evaluation Office for this year's annual report show that there has been a decline in the overall number of country offices with dedicated monitoring and evaluation units. Only 27 per cent of country offices have dedicated monitoring and evaluation units, as opposed to 31 per cent reported last year. In many of the country offices, the

monitoring and evaluation function is integrated into a larger unit within the country office, and staff members responsible for monitoring and evaluation often carry out other functions (see Table 5).

Table 5. Evaluation capacity in country offices in 2010

	Global	Africa	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and the CIS	Latin America and the Caribbean
Number of countries	139	45	18	25	26	25
Regional evaluation advisor	5	3	1	0	0	1
Number of dedicated monitoring and evaluation specialists	51	20	6	9	2	14
Number of country offices monitoring and evaluation units	37	20	2	4	0	11
Percentage of country office with monitoring and evaluation units	27	44	11	16	0	44

40. Evaluation capacity at the regional bureaux level remains unchanged compared with what was reported last year. The Regional Bureau for Africa has a Headquarters-based adviser and two regional advisers in Johannesburg and Dakar; the Regional Bureau for the Arab States has a regional adviser in Cairo; and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean has a regional adviser in Panama. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have yet to have dedicated staff for monitoring and evaluation support.

41. To facilitate greater collaboration and coordination in promoting the culture of evaluation in UNDP, a community of evaluation focal points has been set up, comprising regional policy and practice bureaux, evaluation advisers in regional bureaux, regional service centres, the Evaluation Office, and evaluation units of the UNDP associated funds and programmes. This group has regular meetings involving Headquarters and regional service centre staff (through video conferencing), with a rotating chairperson. The group mainly discusses topics related to decentralized evaluation. Issues covered to date include the revised evaluation policy, preparation of evaluation plans, quality assessment of decentralized evaluation and evaluation expert rosters, as well as initiatives undertaken by bureaux and units in supporting the community of practitioners in evaluation. It is hoped that this exchange of ideas will improve evaluation culture and practice in UNDP.

Support to national evaluation capacity

42. Several country offices carried out various programmatic interventions to support growing demand to enhance national evaluation capacity in their programme countries. In Vanuatu, UNDP and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific provided an introduction to the monitoring and evaluation unit for the office of the Prime Minister. This introduction focused on how to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Vanuatu Priorities and Action Agenda. UNDP Cambodia and UNDP Viet Nam carried out training on monitoring and evaluation for national implementing partners. In countries such as Ecuador and the Dominican Republic, interagency work has highlighted the importance of monitoring and evaluation at the country level. In Venezuela, an active monitoring and evaluation group was formed by UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), working jointly to foster a results-oriented approach among the agencies.

43. In an ongoing effort to strengthen decentralized evaluations, the Regional Bureaux for Africa, Europe and the CIS, and Latin America and the Caribbean organized training on results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, in collaboration with the Operations Support Group, Learning

Resource Centre, Bureau for Development Policy and the Evaluation Office. In Africa, such training was provided to national counterparts in six countries from the region (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Malawi, Mauritius, Republic of the Congo and Senegal). The regional service centre for Latin America and Caribbean, in coordination with Headquarters units, developed a shorter version of this training to be used in countries of the region. In 2010 such training events were conducted in Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil and Venezuela. A regional community of practice was established in the region in 2010 to facilitate effective exchange of information, experiences, expertise, knowledge and skills. The Panama-based regional service centre facilitates this community of practice. It is an important tool to share solutions and best practices, in this way supporting the evaluation capacities and evaluation culture in the region.

II. Key findings and lessons learned from independent evaluations

44. This section summarizes the key findings and lessons learned from independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office in 2010. The following evaluations were used for the analysis:

a. Ten ADRs carried out in Bangladesh, El Salvador, Ghana, Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mongolia, Paraguay, Senegal and Somalia[4]; and

b. Five thematic evaluations.[5]

45. ADRs confirmed that UNDP has continued to be recognized as a trusted and valued partner in development by its national counterparts, contributing to human development in the programme countries. The strengths of UNDP in assisting governments in achieving their development agendas are demonstrated in programme interventions that are highly relevant to national priorities. UNDP shows a capacity for facilitating political dialogue and for providing leadership for aid coordination. While UNDP enjoys a high degree of influence with governments and is often described as being in a "privileged" position in the countries, evaluation recommendations stress the need for a more strategic approach. Issues highlighted in the 2010 evaluations are summarized below.

A. Balancing upstream and downstream work, short-term and long-term investments

46. UNDP continues to be well positioned to engage in catalytic downstream work that often yields critical results as well as useful policy lessons. Codification of what works and what does not work needs to be done more systematically, so that UNDP can provide useful policy advice and so that governments and other development partners can effectively sustain and scale up their efforts to continue into the future what the UNDP initiatives have begun. Evaluations, however, find that downstream work is often carried out without consideration for opportunities for up-scaling. For UNDP to be effective at upstream and downstream work, and for the organization to achieve a balance between these two activities, country offices require an appropriate mix of skill sets, including not only substantive advisory capacity, but also robust programme management and administrative capacity.

47. UNDP faces the challenge of finding the most appropriate balance between short-term and long-term investments at the country-level. UNDP has been responsive in helping governments address immediate demands and day-to-day requirements in a number of areas, and has provided extensive project-based support. However, UNDP does not always leverage its strong relationship with governments to address longer-term capacity development for sustained results. For example, UNDP has achieved a measure of success in many micro-level, short-term recovery activities, but at the cost of being able to help countries integrate disaster risk reduction into long-term development planning. ADRs reveal that UNDP has often also been responsive to requests from donors and governments to undertake

[4] Other ADRs conducted in 2011 but which cover countries with programmes going to later than the June 2011 Executive Board meeting have not been included. The countries include Brazil, Egypt, Thailand and Tunisia.

[5] Evaluation of UNDP contribution to disaster prevention and recovery; Evaluation of UNDP contribution to strengthening local governance; Evaluation of UNDP contribution to strengthening national capacities; Evaluation of UNDP contribution to environmental management for poverty reduction: the poverty-environment nexus; and Evaluation of UNDP contribution at the regional level to development and corporate results.

new and unforeseen activities. While the flexibility of UNDP is appreciated by partners, this has also had the unintended consequences of fragmenting the focus of the programme and affecting the organization's credibility as a neutral development partner, as well as losing the opportunity to develop a longer-term strategy relevant to the countries.

B. UNDP partnership strategy

48. Evaluations show that UNDP has generally worked well with the United Nations system around planning frameworks. Translating planning frameworks into joint programmes, however, has been inhibited by various factors. These have included limited awareness of UNDP activities among development partners or UNDP lack of knowledge of other partners' activities. This has resulted in missed opportunities for collaboration, synergy and achieving efficiency when assisting the countries. Other inhibiting factors include: insufficient funds for joint programmes as participating parties have not committed the required resources, and the existence of differences in policies and agendas among development partners. UNDP needs to strengthen its partnership with civil society, the private sector and emerging development partners. Insufficient involvement or a lack of involvement of civil society organizations, private sector partners and local government authorities in UNDP programmatic activities and policy dialogue was highlighted in several ADRs as one of the key issues affecting the sustainability of UNDP interventions. This shortcoming has limited the ability of UNDP to reach a wider audience, and has often prevented the organization from demonstrating its comparative advantage. Programme countries are widening their partnerships with non-traditional development partners through South-South cooperation and cooperation with the private sector. UNDP is frequently requested by governments to help them better engage with emerging partners in the South, but has not always been well equipped to respond to such demands in a timely manner. In order to remain relevant, UNDP needs to adapt its partnership strategy to these changing dynamics, using innovations made by some country offices and regional bureaux.

C. Mainstreaming cross-practice work and cross-cutting themes

49. Although some progress has been made in promoting joint interventions across UNDP focus areas (for example, through the poverty-environment initiative), evaluations show that the UNDP practice architecture and operational structure generally reinforce the separation of focus areas, encourage individualistic approaches to specific topics and discourage cross-sector cooperation. Mainstreaming and cross-practice work, such as in the areas of capacity development and poverty-environment linkages, have been at the discretion of individual managers, and have not always constituted a systematic response to national challenges or to the corporate agenda. The importance of multi-dimensional approaches in achieving development results is recognized by most country offices. ADRs have suggested, however, that UNDP programmes have often been developed and delivered in silos, without fully leveraging the complementarities that exist across various practice areas.

50. At Headquarters the work of the various policy bureaux and their sub-units are, in the main, compartmentalized. The establishment of regional service centres, however, has contributed to an improvement in cross-practice collaboration by putting in place measures that include the co-location of practice or thematic units, the development of joint work plans, the establishment of shared knowledge management units, and joint missions to country offices. Rather than organizing their office structure in accordance with corporately defined focus areas, several country offices have, with good results, used their own programmatic focus and themes, based on their needs and strategic intent. This approach has, however, affected reporting along the pre-defined corporate tracks. While there is no blue print for country office configuration, useful lessons can be drawn from offices that have succeeded in innovating effective cross-practice work.

D. Promoting United Nations values: gender

51. Results from the ADRs show that in some countries the programmes have been able to incorporate gender aspects well. While positive results (such as increased awareness on gender issues at the country level and the development of a relevant strategy for programmes) have been reported, UNDP

performance on gender mainstreaming has remained relatively weak in other countries. In many cases, gender issues are largely unaddressed because of limited and inadequate attention and resources, as well as a lack of appropriate analysis to formulate concrete strategies. This lack has included the absence of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for gender components. Some of the thematic evaluations (of the poverty and environment nexus and of disaster prevention and recovery) have also recommended that UNDP continue to enhance its efforts to integrate gender equality in practice areas.

E. Lessons from country programming

52. Evaluations have provided some lessons from country-level programming. First, many projects and programmes are developed without a well-defined results framework. They often lack concrete baselines or measures of performance. In some cases, the linkages between outputs and outcomes are weak and indicators and targets are too broadly defined. Even when elaborate indicators are defined in country programme and project documents, they are not always used in regular monitoring, annual reviews or oversight by regional bureaux.

53. Secondly, UNDP projects, particularly pilot and short-term interventions, are often designed without a strategy for "graduation" that goes beyond exit strategies. Successful experiences show the importance of building ownership and partnership strategies into the design of the programme and reviewing the progress being made on these strategies when monitoring and exercising oversight. Results of the ADRs suggest that developing explicit plans for scaling up pilot activities prior to the launch of such projects, as well as appropriate sustainability strategies, is crucial if UNDP pilot interventions are to become full-fledged government projects or projects for interested development partners.

54. Thirdly, effective learning of lessons requires strong monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management and guidance. Country offices are not always able to tap into the full wealth of UNDP experience. Communication between and within bureaux and other programme units has been found to be limited and corporate support is often fragmented. Guidance is often supply driven rather than demand driven, and too general to be easily adapted to the unique circumstances of particular countries. It is not consistently complemented by technical support and guidance from Headquarters and regional service centres and by oversight from the regional bureaux. In addition, an appropriate and effective system for knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation is not in place in some country offices, limiting the opportunities for staff and partners to generate, share and benefit from lessons learned from their interventions.

55. Challenges in business and operational processes are also highlighted in some ADRs, often in the form of complications in the use of the financial management system, Atlas, and delays in payments to partners or in procurement. These are reported as often negatively effecting the timely and full completion of planned projects, and compromising the overall efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP interventions.

III. Programme of work for the Evaluation Office for 2011-2012

56. The programme of work for the Evaluation Office is aligned with the UNDP strategic plan and approved by the Executive Board. The 2011 programme of work of the Evaluation Office is as follows, and will be funded under the 2010-2011 biennial support budget approved by the Executive Board in January 2010. A proposed programme of work for 2012 is also provided, as planning for this work will need to start in 2011.

A. Approved programme of work 2011

Evaluations to be undertaken in 2011

(a) Fifteen assessments of development results.

(b) Evaluation of UNDP effectiveness in facilitating the use of global funds to achieve development results.

(c) Evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP support to strengthening electoral systems and processes.

(d) Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to poverty reduction.

(f) Evaluation of the UNDP assistance to conflict affected countries.

(g) Evaluation of gender mainstreaming.

(e) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategic plan.

57. The approved programme of work for 2011 also included three evaluations of the regional cooperation frameworks in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean respectively. Following the extension of these programmes so that they could be aligned with the strategic plan, however, the evaluations have been postponed. Similarly, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategic plan will only be conducted in 2012. This evaluation will build on the mid-term review of the strategic plan due to be presented to the Executive Board in September 2011.

Support to strengthening the culture of evaluation in 2011

(a) Organizing a second conference on national evaluation capacities to be held in South Africa.

(b) Supporting evaluation capacity development among UNDP staff and national partners through preparation of guidance for decentralized evaluations, quality assurance of decentralized evaluations, development of an e-learning course on evaluation, and strengthening the roster of evaluation consultants.

(c) Managing the Evaluation Resources Centre.

(d) Managing EvalNet and developing evaluation knowledge products.

(e) Hosting and managing the secretariat of UNEG and contributing to the UNEG programme of work.

B. Proposed programme of work 2012

(a) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategic plan.

(b) Five evaluations of the regional programmes in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, Europe and the CIS, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

(c) Evaluation of the Global Programme.

(d) Evaluation of the South-South cooperation programme.

(e) Assessments of Development Results.

58. Given the increase in workload as a result of undertaking evaluations of all five regional programmes, the global programme and the programme on South-South cooperation in a single year, it may be necessary to reduce the number of ADRs undertaken in 2012. The Evaluation Office will undertake a workload analysis to determine the number of ADRs that can be undertaken without compromising the quality of the evaluations.